https://comment-fic.livejournal.com/142354.html?thread=30414866#t30414866

Tarnished 1/2

R for violence and the evidence of violence. Not sure if this fits your prompt, but I hope you like it.

Sam was sitting up before he consciously heard the wings, and reaching for a weapon before he realized that he smelled blood.

There were three figures in the dark room, and then there was one, and Gabriel was left. Sam stared at him, hand on the lamp switch, other hand on his gun.

"Non-permanent," was all Gabriel said, before collapsing, and then blood was soaking into the sheets of the hotel bed.

Sleep made Sam slow, and he sat there dumbly for far too many seconds before he realized that it was Gabriel's blood that he was smelling, and that Gabriel wasn't moving.

Shock lifted, and Sam scrambled to help the archangel, helped him lie fully on the bed, began to clean up the blood, began to ask what happened.

But Gabriel was out, and Sam didn't want to know how that had happened. It didn't seem possible, but Gabriel was still bleeding, and he needed to help. (Gabriel was their ally now, after all. Dean didn't like it, but an ally from any corner was welcomed onto the team.)

By the time Sam got the room light on, he was supposed to be ready for whatever he saw.

He wasn't.

Gabriel's green jacket only existed as sleeves, now, and the shirt underneath was gone, showing the bloody holes on Gabriel's back.

It didn't take a genius to realize that the bloody wounds were placed where Gabriel's wings would have joined his body, if he manifested them, and Sam had seen Gabriel manifest his wings before.

Just once, but it was difficult to forget the sight of two glorious golden wings, or six thousand wings, or how many there had been - Sam hadn't been able to pin down an exact number. But they had all been Gabriel's wings, and Sam had seen them.

Sam, veteran of a thousand bloody wounds from a thousand different sources, was hesitant to even try to help these wounds.

But they were bleeding, and he had to *do something* -

So he grabbed the first aid kit and approached Gabriel, trying to remember how

to treat back wounds. (- if too deep, the wounds may have punctured the lungs (did angels even have lungs?) - had the heart been hit? -)

Sam breathed. Step One: try to stop the bleeding. Then he could find out what happened.

Tarnished 2/2

Gabriel stayed out, and Sam was thankful for that. It gave him time to bandage the wounds, call Dean, and change the sheets so Gabriel wasn't sleeping on bloody sheets.

It also gave him time to come down from the shock of seeing one of the most powerful creatures he'd ever seen being injured this badly.

Cas hadn't exactly made things better, either. When he entered with Dean, he had taken one look at Gabriel, frozen, and then vanished. Sam had to hide his shiver at the sound of wings, and then he had to calm down Dean.

Cas reappeared twenty minutes later, face set in an expression Sam didn't want to figure out.

"Show me his injuries." Cas was blunt and to the point, at least, so Sam did so. Again he didn't try to figure out the new expression on Cas' face. "Put this directly on them. Don't let him remove it when he wakes."

"What is it?"

"Very old. Powerful." It wasn't often that Sam saw Cas needing to steady himself. "One of the few things that can help him."

"What happened to him? These aren't normal stab wounds, right?" Dean was the one to ask, and Sam at once didn't want to know and he needed to know.

Cas steadied himself again, taking in air he didn't need.

"He has...been punished. Heaven does not like his choice."

"I got that. What'd they do to him?"

Cas looked at Gabriel, looking down and then back at Dean. "One of the worst punishments Heaven can give. He has been stripped of his wings." Cas paused, but went on again. "It is said to be a pain comparable to no other, and there is no way to escape the feeling, not until they are done."

Sam silently stood and walked over to sit next to Gabriel on the bed. He didn't

want to think about it.

"Lucifer did this?" Dean asked, and Sam could hear the rage in his voice.

"No," Sam said. "He...two angels dropped him here."

"Michael and Raphael." Cas said, after a moment. "They...are warning us."

"Some warning." Dean muttered.

"He will recover," Cas said after another moment. "His wings will return, after many years have passed. If he maintains his Grace."

But Sam was ignoring Dean and Cas, instead looking at Gabriel, feeling his own anger bloom there. He didn't like the pained expression on Gabriel's face, he didn't like the smell of blood.

Most of all: hatred. Hatred at a Heaven that could do this. Not to Gabriel, who was better than many of the angels he had met. Better in his own way.

Remembered: Lucifer's whispered promises of revenge and pain to the angels who had ruined their lives.

Sam exhaled, brushed Gabriel's hair back, and closed his eyes. In his mind's eye there was Lucifer, always listening, always able to find his vessel. Sigils were well and good for his body, but his mind had no such thing.

He thought of the pain on Gabriel's face, and everything he had ever seen his brother go through, and he thought: *Yes.*